'Sort of Plot'

Magazine Has Ray Statement

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NEW YORK (AP) — James Earl Ray, charged in the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., is quoted in the current Look magazine as having said he unknowingly became involved in "some sort of plot to kill King" eight months before the murder.

Author William Bradford Huie says Ray wrote from his Memphis, Tenn., jail cell: "I suppose I became involved in some sort of plot to kill King when I first took those packages into the United States from Canada . . . But nobody told me anything about any planned murder of King or of anyone else."

THE "PACKAGES" were not identifed by Ray or Huie.

The article quotes Ray as having written that, while a fugitive in Canada in August, 1967, he met a man named Raoul who offered him money, a car and "travel papers" if he would establish himself in Birmingham, Ala., and make himself "available."

Before leaving for Birmingham, Ray made two auto trips across the border at Windsor-Detroit with "packages" concealed in his old car by Raoul, Huie relates.

In Birmingham, Ray got a room and bought a white Mustang with $2,000 given him by Raoul, Huie wrote. Raoul also gave Ray $500 for living expenses and $500 for some camera equipment, the article states. Huie said Ray did not know why he was asked to buy photographic equipment.

After six weeks in Birmingham, Ray went to Mexico where he met Raoul and, at Raoul's request, hauled a spare tire across the border into Nuevo Laredo, Huie relates.

Ray traveled about in Mexico then drove to Los Angeles in November, 1967, where, Huie says, he received "a command to come to New Orleans for instructions."

He quotes Ray as having written that he drove to New Orleans, where Raoul "said we had one more job to do and we'd do it in about two or three months."

RAY WROTE that Raoul promised him "travel papers" to anywhere he wanted to go and $12,000, and when he asked what the job was he was told "not to worry about it and not to ask questions," Huie states. Ray said Raoul gave him $2,500 in $20 bills, the article relates.

Back in Los Angeles, Huie says Ray took dancing and bartending lessons, visited a hypnotist, and had a plastic surgeon change the shape of his nose.

"Before his nose could heal completely," Huie wrote, "Ray received by mail on March 15 the directive he had been expecting. He was wanted in Selma and Birmingham, Ala.—where King was recruiting support for his poor people's march on Washington."

Huie relates that Ray registered in a motel in Selma on March 22, and went to Atlanta the next day. He quotes a news dispatch that said King had gone to Atlanta on March 21, after a swing through Alabama. King was slain in Memphis, Tenn., on April 4.

Huie said he could not reveal all he learned from Ray until after his trial, but that he was convinced King's murder was plotted "by calculating men who wanted to use his murder to trigger violent conflict between white and Negro citizens."

"The primary target was the United States of America," Huie writes.